

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL

ON MONDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2025 AT 7:30PM

Present:

Cllrs Richards, Boon, Davis, Russell, Jenkinson, Sheppard, Larkin, Baxter-Smith and Baylis

In attendance:

Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Anna Blyth (Deputy Clerk)

Cllr Mark Munday (part of the meeting)

1 member of the public (part of the meeting)

1. Apologies for Absence and declarations of interest

Cllrs Darrah, Mobbs and Knight.

No declarations of interest were declared.

2. Public Session (no decisions)

No members of the public had requested to speak at the meeting.

3. Minutes of Parish Council Meetings

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 1 September 2025 had been circulated beforehand by the Clerk. They were agreed for accuracy and proposed for acceptance by Cllr Baxter-Smith, seconded Cllr Russell and voted for unanimously by those present at that meeting and signed by the Chair.

The Chair proposed that item 6a. be brought forward and discussed first. This proposal was unanimously agreed by all Cllrs.

a. Parish Highways/footpaths/street lighting/landscaping and tree works

The Clerk advised that a small number parishioners had raised concerns regarding the 267 and 268 Hams Travel school bus services, which stop on Goudhurst Road opposite the Old Station Garage. They reported that the buses often obstruct the main driveway to Station Oasts and that children waiting for the bus stand in the roadway, creating potential safety risks for residents attempting to exit their properties during school travel times. This situation is expected to worsen once the Bassett's Farm housing development is complete, as more children will be catching the bus. Parishioners asked the PC to consider a more suitable location for the bus stop to ensure safety and accessibility.

Cllrs discussed the matter and agreed that a small group of Cllrs would attend on a school morning between 7:15 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. to observe the situation. It was agreed that the Kent

County Councillor, Borough Councillors, and a representative from Persimmon Homes would also be invited to attend.

The Clerk advised that a resident had raised a concern regarding the lack of available parking at Gunlands, noting that residents are unable to park outside their properties. The resident suggested that the adjacent grass banks could be converted into valuable parking spaces. After some investigation, it is understood that the land is owned by Town & Country Housing Group, and the resident has contacted them directly regarding the matter. The Clerk asked Cllrs if they were happy to support the resident's request. Cllr Boon proposed that the PC support this as it would benefit the surrounding community and those unable to park in the area; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

The Clerk raised concerns following correspondence from frustrated residents regarding the lateness of the 267 Hams Travel school bus and informed Cllrs that many parents have been complaining about this issue. It was agreed to ask Cllr Mark Munday (KCC) whether he can assist in addressing this matter.

4. Parish Council Finance

a. **Agree payments listing up to and including 30 September 2025 as attached (Appendix 1- See end of document)**

The Clerk showed a copy of the list of payments up to and including 30 September 2025 as a total of £6,294.00. Cllr Davis proposed approval of the schedule of payments; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

Cllrs Jenkinson and Davis agreed to release and authorise payments from the bank this month.

b. **Bank Reconciliations as at 30 September 2025**

The bank balance for the Council's Unity Trust Bank (current account) at 31 August 2025 was displayed with a total at £109,044.36. The Clerk confirmed receipt of the second precept payment into the bank account.

This was confirmed as correct against the respective bank statement and signed by the Chair.

c. **Discuss and note response from external auditor/finalisation of AGAR**

The Clerk confirmed that the end of year annual return for 2024-25 had now finally been completed with Mazars LLP without any recommendations. The Clerk had contacted Mazaars on several occasions to seek guidance as to when the AGAR would be returned, as it was nearing the deadline. The finalised AGAR was eventually received on the statutory deadline date, which resulted in delayed publication (by one day) due to it being received on the Clerk's day off.

The PC noted the return of the audit with no issues. The Chair proposed acceptance of the audit, which was unanimously approved by all present.

d. **Agree final quotation for CCTV at the public conveniences, acceptance of KCC grant for £500 towards costs and adopt DPIA (Data Protection Impact Assessment)**

The Clerk advised that KCC have now formally offered a members grant of £500 towards this project. Cllr Boon proposed acceptance of the £500 grant; seconded Cllr Larkin. Unanimous.

The Clerk further advised that, due to the time taken to investigate grant options, the overall cost for the CCTV installation has increased slightly to £1,602.69, up from the original estimate of £1,495.90. Cllr Boon proposed acceptance of the increase (total £106.79); seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Unanimous.

The Clerk had circulated a draft Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their review and agreement. Cllr Baxter-Smith proposed acceptance of the DPIA as drafted; seconded Cllr Jenkinson. Unanimous.

e. **Request from PWCAC for donation/grant**

The Clerk had circulated a grant request letter from Paddock Wood Community Advice Centre (PWCAC) to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their consideration.

Cllr Sheppard proposed that the PC grant £250 to PWCAC in recognition of their valuable service; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

The Chair asked Cllr Mark Munday (KCC) whether he has any updates at county level and noted that the PC had a few points to raise with him.

- The Clerk raised the concerns received from parishioners regarding school buses (267,268) regularly blocking the driveway to Station Oast properties and safety risks associated with large numbers of children at the bus stop. Cllr Munday agreed to meet with PC members one morning to assess the situation on-site. It was noted that the issue is likely to worsen once the new development at Bassetts Farm is completed and more children use the stop. It was also agreed that the developer should be involved in discussions to find a solution.
- The Clerk raised the concerns regarding the 267 school bus to Tunbridge Wells, noting that it is consistently arriving late to school, which has led to ongoing complaints to KCC and the bus operator from parents. Cllr Munday requested that the Clerk email him the details so that he can raise the matter at the next Joint Transportation Board (JTB) meeting.
- Cllr Munday advised that electoral poll voting may in the future be extended to weekends, subject to potential legislative changes.

5. Planning

a. **Planning applications**

Planning Application:	25/02031/FULL
Proposal:	<u>Porch extension; first & second floor rear extension; alterations to external fenestration & installation of 2 no. rooflights</u>
Location:	2 Wharf Cottages, Goudhurst Road, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 8AP
Recommendation	Approval
Proposal	Cllr Sheppard; seconded Cllr Davis. Carried.
Comments	Recommend approval as reasonable development. All works should be carried out in line with Horsmonden Parish Councils Sustainability policy.

b. Discuss agenda for HDAG Meeting on 14 October 2025

The Clerk had circulated a draft agenda to Cllrs prior to the meeting for their review.

Cllrs agreed with the content of the agenda. Cllr Baxter-Smith added that an item should be included to discuss the development of a comprehensive strategy for the village, including a roadmap for identifying community needs and considering potential external consultancy support.

c. Feedback and updates on planning and enforcement matters

The Clerk advised that correspondence had been received from Fernham Homes who are looking to deliver the 68 homes on the recently approved outline planning permission on Brenchley Road (ref. 22/00296/OUT). They have advised that they are keen to meet with the PC to introduce themselves and discuss the village hall land agreed in the original application. Cllrs discussed and agreed that Fernham Homes could be invited to the PCs planning committee meeting in November.

Regarding enforcement matters, the Clerk advised that there were no major updates to report. TWBC have issued a new spreadsheet which will give regular updates on planning enforcement matters however this is a working progress and is at the early stages of development.

6. Parish Council Decisions/Administration

a. Parish Highways/footpath/street lighting/landscaping and tree works

Discussed above.

b. HIPs (Highways Improvement Plan) HIPS – Agree final priorities for utilising the £25k Rural Parish Grant (deadline 31 October)

The Clerk had shared the PC's recently updated HIP with Cllrs prior to the meeting.

The PC noted that, with regards to the Rural Parish Grant offered by TWBC, HIP 1 (Maidstone Road approach to the crossroads) must be prioritised, as this is the most progressed improvement on the HIP and the design can be delivered within the timescale and (hopefully) budget set, although a clear budget had not yet been received.

Cllr Davis proposed that the PC proceed with HIP 1 for utilising the grant from TWBC; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

The PC acknowledged suggestions from parishioners regarding a raised table and improved junction warning signage on Lamberhurst Road and confirmed that these have been added to the PC's HIP under item 5 for separate investigation and potential future implementation.

Cllr Russell raised that as the chemist is now open for business on Green Road, the PC could now request that the traffic survey is carried out as detailed under HIP 4. Deputy Clerk to arrange.

c. Formally agree internal works at the Institute Building

The Clerk had circulated details of internal works at the Institute Building to Cllrs prior to the meeting. As landlords of the building, the PC's formal approval of the plans is required to allow the Social Club Committee to apply for a grant. The works include improvements to the kitchen

and lobby, as well as the installation of soundproofing panels in the main bar and small bar areas. It was noted that there would be no cost to the PC for these works.

Cllr Boon proposed acceptance of the internal works as detailed; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

d. Discuss/agree use of Sports Club land for firework display

The Clerk had circulated paperwork regarding the proposed firework display to Cllrs prior to the meeting. The event, scheduled for 8th November, is being organised by FoHPS (Friends of Horsmonden Primary School), who are engaging a professional firework company. FoHPS were initially unaware that the PC own the land and lease it to the Sports Club, and therefore did not realise that PC permission was required.

All risk assessments and relevant paperwork have been received and have also been submitted via the SAG (Safety Advisory Group) app, which coordinates with TWBC and Kent Police. All documentation and requirements are in order.

Cllr Jenkinson proposed acceptance of the firework display organised by FoHPS; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

The Clerk raised that this has highlighted that the community are not fully aware of the PC's role, which areas of the parish are owned by the Council, and the work the Council undertakes. Cllrs discussed ways to raise awareness and agreed that the quarterly newsletter could be a good means of communication. This item will be added to November's agenda for further discussion.

e. Update from Chair regarding recent KALC meetings re Government Reorganisation

The Chair provided a brief update to Cllrs following a recent Parish Chairs meeting regarding the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The Chair emphasized the importance of local parishes working together as a group. It was noted that PCs may have additional responsibilities in the future, although the specifics are not yet clear. Further updates will follow as more information becomes available.

f. Response to Ben Chapelard's questions about Local Government Reorganisation

The Clerk had circulated a letter from Ben Chapelard @ TWBC regarding the Local Government Reorganisation and asked Cllrs to consider each question in turn.

After discussion it was agreed that the following answers would be submitted:

- What are the key factors you think should be taken into account and why? **The Parish Council do not wish to see any reduction in representation at Ward Level .**
- What opportunities could be realised by reorganisation and what are your aspirations? **It will be easier for parishioners to know who to contact and there could be some efficiencies in staffing**
- What problems could be fixed by reorganisation and why? **There could be fewer Chief Executive salaries to be paid resulting in a saving.**
- What problems could be created or will not be fixed by reorganisation and why? **The Unitary Council's will be encumbered with debt from day one –**

not only inherited debt from existing councils but also the debt incurred by the cost of the reorganisation procedure as the government has not set aside sufficient funding for this . Many of the buildings and assets they take on will be in a poor state of repair and need money spent on them . If the unitaries don't want to upkeep them, who will take these assets on ? There could be less accountability .

Cllr Larkin proposed acceptance of the answers detailed above; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

g. Feedback from the 2025 Horse Fair – Electricity charges

The Clerk reported that the Horse Fair was overall a success, however attendance was noticeably lower than previous years. An issue was noted regarding one of the PCs electricity boxes on the Green, which was not functioning correctly on the day. In view of this, only a minimal amount of electricity was consumed and the Clerk requested that Councillors consider waiving the electricity charge for this year.

Cllr Sheppard proposed that the PC waive any electricity charges for this year; seconded Cllr Boon. Unanimous.

It was noted that the principal issue arising from the fair concerned the sale of catapults. There were reports of disturbances in the village, with traveller children firing at trees and houses. This matter has been reported to the police. Cllrs agreed that the PC should make it clear that a stall selling catapults will not be permitted at next year's fair.

Cllrs also discussed the collection of deposits for future village green bookings. The PC encountered difficulties obtaining a cheque from the organiser this year, and with the imminent discontinuation of cheques, alternative payment methods will need to be considered. The Clerk commented that this matter had been raised before with no suitable solutions found however, she will discuss with the auditor again.

Cllr Larkin spoke about the benefits of My Community Voice, an online platform provided by Kent Police that allows residents to stay informed about local policing issues, report non-emergency concerns, and provide feedback on their community. Through the site, people can see updates on local crime and anti-social behaviour, share their views to help shape policing priorities, and receive alerts about what's happening in their area. Cllr Larkin suggested that the PC advertise the platform more widely and actively encourage locals to use it, as it is a valuable tool for keeping the community engaged and involved in local safety.

h. Consider policy review:

Dark Skies Policy

Cllr Baxter-Smith proposed acceptance of the Dark Skies policy as drafted with no changes; seconded Cllr Davis. Unanimous.

Draft IT Policy

Cllr Boon proposed acceptance of the newly drafted IT policy with no changes; seconded Cllr Baxter-Smith. Unanimous.

i. Feedback following HPC meeting with Sports Club on 25 September

Cllr Baxter-Smith provided a brief update to Cllrs following the meeting held with the Sports Club on 25 September.

The discussion focused on the potential layout of the site to accommodate both a sports pavilion and a village hall. Various options were discussed, including the possibility of providing separate entrances for the two facilities and identifying which areas could be designed as shared spaces. It was also noted that the proposed village hall may be larger than the sports hall within the overall scheme. Before any decisions can be made, it was agreed that a clearer understanding of the community's needs and priorities is required. To support this, the PC discussed the potential appointment of a consulting firm to carry out a village-wide consultation. The Clerk was asked to research how other parishes have approached similar projects and report back with possible options.

j. Discuss the future of the Fromandez Drive wildflower garden (approval of additional maintenance costs with the extra area added)

Cllr Larkin advised that she is unable to continue leading the wildflower garden project on Fromandez Drive. The Clerk asked how the PC wish to proceed, noting that Cllr Larkin has dedicated significant time and effort to the project. After discussion, it was agreed that the PC will monitor the site for now and review how it develops over the next 12 months.

The Clerk advised that she had obtained a quotation from Capel Groundcare to include the triangle of land at the end of the Fromandez Drive wildflower garden in the PCs maintenance schedule, ensuring it is incorporated into the regular cutting programme. It was noted that this would increase the overall maintenance cost for 2026 for Fromandez Drive from £170 to £216 per year.

Cllr Boon proposed acceptance of the additional maintenance costs as detailed; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

k. Consider recycling options for old Cllr Laptops

The Clerk advised that Kent County Council (KCC) operate a Device Recycling Scheme, which would be an appropriate avenue for the disposal of all old Cllr laptops. The scheme ensures 100% data wiping prior to refurbishment, after which the devices are repurposed to support members of the community who would benefit from access to a device.

Cllr Larkin proposed that the old Cllr laptops are recycled to the KCC scheme; seconded Cllr Russell. Unanimous.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.50pm

APPENDIX 1

Date: 01/10/2025

Horsmonden Parish Council Current Year

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Time: 13:11

Current A/c- Unity Trust Bank

List of Payments made between 01/09/2025 and 30/09/2025

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
01/09/2025	Lloyds Bank PLC	DD	3.00		Credit card invoice Sept
03/09/2025	NPower Business solutions	BACS	56.65		Electricity Christmas lights
03/09/2025	HMRC	BACS	677.60		Tax & NI September
05/09/2025	Peoples partnership	DD	238.18		Pensions september
09/09/2025	Business Stream	DD	207.74		waste water May-Aug
11/09/2025	British Gas Lite	DD	30.62		electricity Toilets Aug
11/09/2025	British Gas Lite	DD	12.79		electricity VG Box Aug
15/09/2025	British Telecom	DD	132.53		Telephone & Broadband
16/09/2025	Castle Water	DD	99.07		water supply toilets
17/09/2025	EE - BT	DD	63.94		Mobile phones sept
25/09/2025	Mrs L Noakes	BACS	1,626.33		Sept salary
25/09/2025	Anna Blyth	BACS	1,170.32		Sept Salary
26/09/2025	P&F Cleaning services LTD	BACS	500.00		cleaning toilets& shelter Sep
26/09/2025	Gillet & Johnston	BACS	230.40		Clock service - annual
26/09/2025	Capel Groundcare	BACS	829.31		Installation of bench FD
26/09/2025	Society Of Local Council Clerk	BACS	36.00		Canva design ttraining
26/09/2025	Microshade VSM	BACS	209.62		September emails and Data
30/09/2025	Mr J Couchman	BACS	160.00		Sept Clock and Play area
30/09/2025	Unity Trust Bank	DD	9.90		bank charges August
Total Payments			6,294.00		